

RESIDENTIAL SMOKE ALARMS



TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS

The two most commonly recognized smoke detection technologies are **ionization** smoke detection and **photoelectric** smoke detection. An ionization type smoke-sensing system is generally more responsive to flaming fires, while photoelectric smoke detection is generally more responsive to a smoldering fire. Both types of smoke alarms offer adequate protection if properly installed and maintained.

TYPES OF ALARM NOTIFICATIONS

The most common smoke alarms have an audible alarm of a sufficient level to wake you while sleeping. For people with hearing impairments, extra-loud alarms are available that also provide a flash and strobe-like light.

NUISANCE ALARMS CAN BE MINIMIZED

The leading cause of nuisance alarms is due to the release of fumes and/or steam during cooking. Kitchens, bathrooms, garages, or near windows are areas of the home with conditions that might set off nuisance alarms. The installation guide for your alarm will offer guidelines and recommended safe distances from nuisance sources to minimize nuisance alarms.

PLACING YOUR SMOKE ALARM

For new construction, residential alterations and rental units, smoke alarms must be installed on each level of the structure, in each sleeping room, and outside each sleeping room in the immediate vicinity. A smoke detector outside the sleeping room will serve as the required alarm for that level.



PLACING YOUR SMOKE ALARM

For new construction, residential alterations and rental units, all smoke alarms must be interconnected. When alarm devices are interconnected, actuating one alarm will actuate all of the alarms in the dwelling. Typically the alarms must be hard-wired together into the house wiring by a qualified licensed electrical contractor. If installing wires from one alarm to the other requires removing drywall, you are allowed to install battery-powered alarms in these areas.

WIRELESS SMOKE ALARMS

The City of Midland allows for the use of wireless interconnected smoke alarms. These systems require that the installer supply only one smoke detector with a 110-volt electrical service, with the remaining smoke detectors battery-powered and interconnected by wireless radio signals.

BATTERY SELECTION FOR SMOKE ALARMS

Rechargeable batteries should not be used in residential smoke alarms. Use a good-quality alkaline type battery, and replace them once a year. Also available are 5- and 10-year batteries, which offer a longer time span between replacements.

TESTING AND MAINTENANCE OF SMOKE ALARMS

- Test your smoke alarms monthly.
- It is suggested that you replace smoke alarm batteries twice a year: *Change Your Clock – Change Your Battery.*
- Replace the batteries if the alarm starts to make a chirping, beeping or buzzing sound.
- Smoke detectors do not last forever. Change out old smoke detectors as per the manufacturers' recommendations.
- Never cover or paint a smoke detector.

DEVELOP AND PRACTICE AN ESCAPE PLAN SO THAT EVERYONE IN THE HOME KNOWS WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF A HOME FIRE.

If you have any questions regarding the installation or operation of smoke alarms please contact the City of Midland Building Department.